The History and Art of Illustration:
A Series of Units for Upper Elementary Students

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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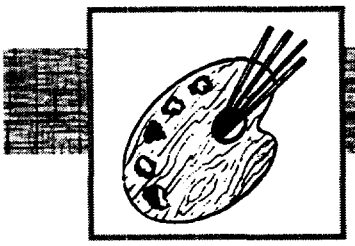
Abstract

This work discusses three categories of illustration: decorative, technical, and narrative. In addition to a study of the history of each of these categories, examples of different illustrations are given, along with information about materials and techniques employed by illustrators. The last section of this work is comprised of three units of discipline-based art education lesson plans devoted to the three categories of illustration. Finally, the units are tied together by a concluding lesson in which the three categories of illustration are unified.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Michael Prater, my thesis advisor, for his willingness to guide me through my entire creative process from start to finish. Thanks also to Kevin Buckley who helped inspire me to explore the area of illustration in great depth.



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Introduction

The history of illustration stretches back to the beginning of human existence. In addition to food and shelter, *Homo sapiens* learned to survive because of communication. The earliest humans communicated with each other both verbally and graphically. Those first graphic depictions of significant buffalo hunts located on cave walls are by definition the first recorded illustrations. Commonly, illustrations are considered to be any graphic depictions that convey ideas, thoughts, or messages. That, however, is a minimal definition. Illustrations are graphic depictions that can be executed in a number of media, including but not limited to pencil, pen and ink, watercolor, intaglio, relief printmaking, and collage. Presently, artists divide illustration into three main categories: decorative, technical, and narrative. Each category has its own rich history and significance in defining illustration today.

Decorative Illustration

Besides cave paintings, the oldest form of illustration is decorative illustration. Decorative illustration can be defined simply by breaking apart its name. Its main purpose is to decorate or illuminate a page in a book or a magazine in order to make it more appealing or cohesive with the rest of the publication. There are two subcategories within decorative illustration that deserve recognition. The first, more antiquated of the two is the illuminated manuscript. The second division deals with book layouts.

Just as prehistoric men executed cave paintings in order to communicate their ideas and achievements, so did monks in the Middle Ages. But instead of drawing on cave walls with berry stains, the monks used gold gilding, brightly colored paints, and encrusted jewels on parchment to create illuminated manuscripts which spread their message of God to the masses. The Middle Ages was a very turbulent time in European

history, with only the church standing between Western Europe and total chaos (Strickland, 1992, p.17). The church felt that the only way to combat all the wretchedness occurring was to spread the word of God. Thus, the major occupation of monastic life at that time consisted of copying manuscripts filled with God's word. The monks' job of transcribing the word of God became increasingly difficult due to the fact that most of the population was illiterate. In order to make their messages understood, the monks began illustrating the Biblical stories they were copying (Lucie- Smith, 1992, p.115).

As the books were circulated in the Romanesque period, the monks began to pay more attention to the pictorial decorations inside of the books. The decoration of these holy books was of two kinds: actual illustrations and elaborately decorated initial letters. While the illustrations served the purpose of educating the public, the decorative letters allowed the monks some form of artistic expression (Lucie-Smith, 1992, pp. 120-1). An example of such is *St. George and Dragon "R"* (fig. 1). The monks who illustrated these books took great artistic pride in their work because they were creating sacred objects that glorified the word of God. For this reason, the monks began illuminating the manuscripts by adding gold and silver leaf and gilding to make them more ornate and precious. It is interesting to note that while illuminated manuscripts are admired today as artistically beautiful objects, such was not the case in the Middle Ages. Even though pages from manuscripts now reside in world famous museums, the monks who created these great illustrations were not even considered artists. Rather, their work was considered to be a lowly craft.

The second type of decorative illustration, that of book layouts, is today considered to be more of a craft than art, even though it stems from the beautifully rendered illuminated manuscripts that artists now revere. Illustrating the pieces of a book

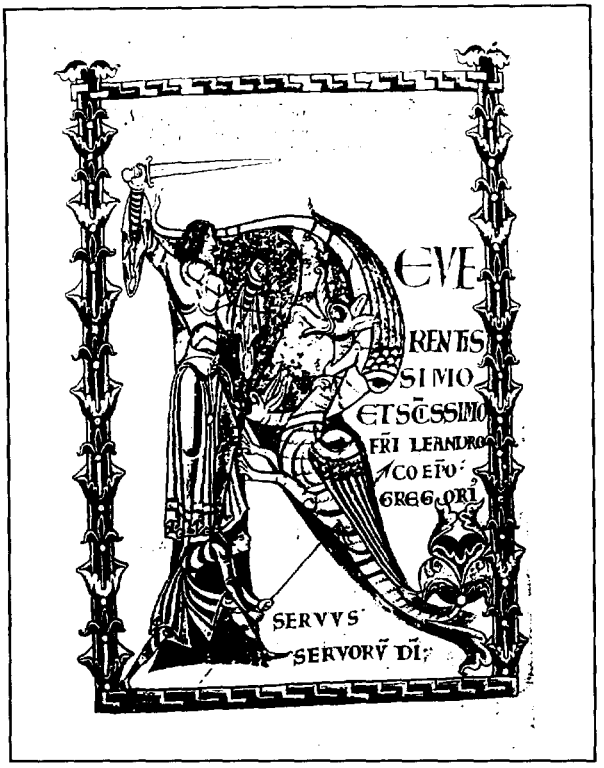


Fig. 1 *St. George and Dragon "R"*

layout in an artistic manner, such as the cover, the title page, and the end papers, contributes to the overall success of the book. Such decoration of the cover and the title page must relate to the rest of the book, in addition to being able to grab the reader's attention. Most people, while shopping for books, tend to disregard the old cliche and tend to actually pick up a book based on its cover. According to Lyn Ellen Lacy, author of Art and design in Children's Books, " The dust jacket and cover is like a poster that reflects mood, text, and artistic style to be found within" (Lacy, 1986, p.7). Cover illustrations must not only advertise the book, but they must allow space within the composition for the text elements of the title, author, and even a space for a future award placement. Inside the book,

> "end paper, half title, title, and dedication pages may each or all demonstrate artistic design as an extension of the cover or beneath the print information may be bits of visual information that constitute background or the beginning of the story itself" (Lacy, 1986, p.7).

It is in this way of decoratively connecting images with text that modern day book layouts resemble illuminated manuscripts. According to artist Tim Rollins, illuminated manuscripts are making a resurgence in society with the help of computers. This is true in the case of book layouts in that computers produce the same decorative effects achieved in illuminated manuscripts, but in a fraction of the time (Rollins, 2000).

Technical Illustration

A second type of illustration is that of technical illustration. Technical illustrators are similar to decorative illustrators in that the artists who started the practice were also considered to be craftsmen rather than artists. Unfortunately, that attitude still exists today in most circles. Technical illustrators are often not viewed as artists because their work is seen by many as detailed sketches or studies rather than as finished works of art. The two most common types of technical illustrations are scientific illustrations and instructional illustrations.

Perhaps the first scientific illustrator is also the most well known and successful at his craft. Being a true Renaissance man, Leonardo Da Vinci ultimately became the world's first scientific illustrator when he used cadavers in his anatomy studies. Even though he broke the law by dissecting over 30 bodies, Da Vince ultimately drew some of the most detailed anatomical studies known to man (Cole, 1994, p. 38). While he lived and worked during the 15th and 16th centuries, " His sketches of the growth of the fetus in the womb [fig. 2]were so accurate they could teach embryology to medical

Fig. 2 *In the Womb* c. 1510

students today" (Strickland, 1992, p.35). Quality scientific illustrators must illustrate their subjects so that others are able to learn from them as well. Da Vince was considered to be a great scientific illustrator because his illustrations follow the basic criteria for good scientific reference illustrations. It makes sense that quality " illustration for reference texts requires exacting and interpretive research by the artist-illustrator" (Klemin, 1970, p.126). For this reason, Da Vinci, as well as modern day scientific illustrators, tended to work from life. Many modern scientific illustrators prefer using preserved or dried specimens as opposed to photographs as models.

The second type of technical illustration is instructional illustration. Instructional illustrations, like scientific illustrations, serve the dual purpose of teaching or instructing as well as being aesthetically pleasing. Instructional illustrations need be very clear-cut

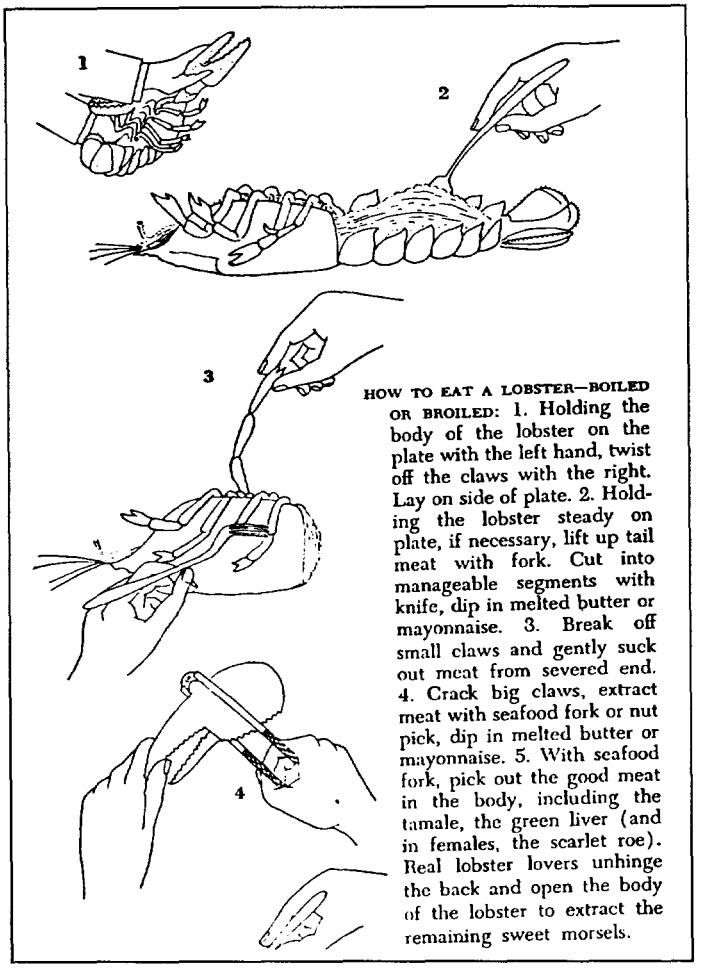


Fig. 3 *How to Eat a Lobster*

and explicit in nature. The viewer must be able to follow the process of doing something, such as eating a lobster (fig. 3), with minimal or nonexistent cues from the text. Clarity is extremely important in such illustrations because often the accompanying text is in a different language than the one the reader speaks and reads. Thus, good instructional illustrators rely on the simplicity of lines and clear details in their drawings. While technical illustrations are important, they are generally not thought of in art circles as being real art. Much in the same manner of decorative illustration, technical illustration

is considered more of a craft than a fine art, even though it is often produced by established fine artists. However, the tide may be turning in the favor of technical illustrators. In June of 1996, the Smithsonian Institute organized a show solely devoted to the art of scientific illustration (http://www. smithsonianmag.si.edu.smithsonian/ issues96/june96/nature.html).

Narrative Illustration

The third and most popular subcategory of illustration is that of narrative illustration. Narrative illustrations help tell a story through pictures. For illustration "to be truly narrative in books a sequence of pictures must additionally indicate a close relationship between cause and effect from one visual to another and may result in a visual account in its own right" (Lacy, 1986, p.14). The best examples of narrative illustrations exist in children's picture books.

The first recorded children's illustrated book was published in Nuremberg in 1658 by Bishop Comenius. The translated title was Visible World- for the Use of Young Latin Scholars and its purpose was to teach Latin through pictures. Unfortunately, the majority of early picture books have vanished from existence because publishers rarely bothered to identify artists and their works (Pitz, 1963, pp 19, 26). Scholars do know, however, that the popularity of children's books became apparent in Europe and America in the late 18th century, and it has grown steadily ever since.

Unlike decorative and technical illustration, narrative illustration has always been viewed as an art form rather than a craft. In fact, it is so celebrated that today many awards exist that celebrate the illustrations done by narrative illustrators. One of the most famous and prestigious awards given to picture book illustrators is the Caldecott Award. Established in 1938 by the American Library Association, the medal is awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in the

United States during the preceding year. Recipients of the award must be citizens or residents of the United States.

Winning books must show evidence of excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed. Additional criteria include a degree of excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept. The award committee, made up of fifteen members of the Association for Library Service to Children, must also consider an overall excellence of presentation, including the written text and overall design of the book (ALA, 1999, pp 5-7). It is interesting to note that only librarians, not artists, are able to judge which picture book has the best illustrations. It is due to this fact that there are major discrepancies in the quality of artwork, artistically speaking, among the Caldecott winners (Table 1).

Techniques and Materials

Just as there are different types of illustrations, there are also different ways of illustrating each of these types. Each of the three types of illustration lend themselves more easily to various styles of illustration. According to Patricia Cianciolo, author of Illustrations in Children's Books,

> "the style of art which is used to illustrate may be influenced by several factors, such as the concept and the mood of the story, the age of the reader, the artist's concept of the anticipated audience, the basic personality of the artist, his creative talent, and the media used to make the pictures" (Cianciolo, 1970, p.54).

Three different styles of art commonly used for decorative, technical, and narrative illustrations include representational, expressionistic, and cartoon art.

Fig. 4 *Alan's Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg

Representational, or realist illustration, is concerned with the facts and details of objects. Outlines are exact and precise, making this style useful in technical illustrating. Realists draw objects close to how they look in reality, "but it must be remembered that each of us has a different perception of a single object" (Cianciolo, 1970, p.33). Meaning, two artists can draw the exact same object in a representational manner, and the finished products would still turn out completely different. An example of an illustrator who works realistically is Chris Van Allsburg (fig.4).

Illustrators also work expressionistically. Expressionism is the direct opposite of representationalism in illustration. Rather than accurate factual portrayals, expressionism deals with emotions and feelings and leans toward abstraction. The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, illustrated by Lane Smith, is an example of a story illustrated expressionistically (fig. 5).

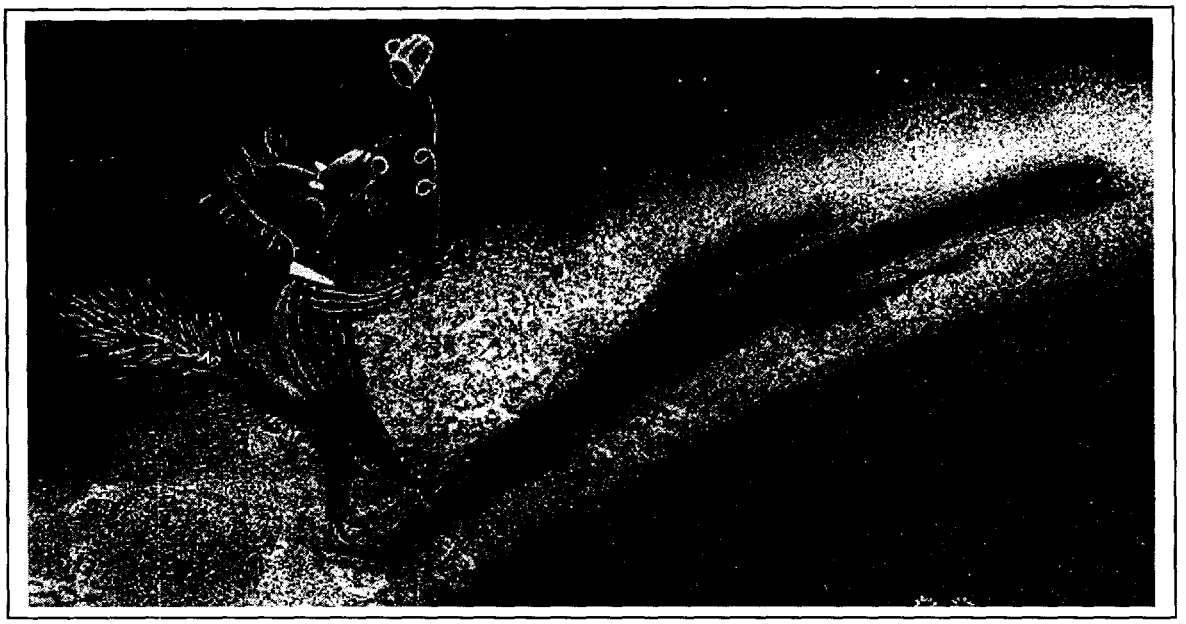


Fig. 5 *A. Wolf Borrowing a Cup of Sugar* by Lane Smith

A third style of art utilized by illustrators is the cartoon style. In narrative illustration, "the cartoon artist, like other expressionistic artists, gives vent to his feelings and provokes an emotional response by means of his sketches, but the emotionalism is usually expressed through or in some form of humor" (Cianciolo, 1970, p.50). Cartoon illustrations provoke smiles and laughs from their readers. An example of a book effectively using the cartoon style in In the Night Kitchen by Maurice Sendak (fig. 6).

Just as illustrators work in different styles, they also work in different media. Illustrators realize that the different materials and techniques available to them affect the manner and extent of the story or message they are trying to get across. This is why different artists often illustrate the same story in very different ways. According to Cianciolo, "One artist will decide that woodcuts would be the best medium to present the message of the story, a second artist will decide that watercolors would best serve his purpose, and a third artist will think a collage technique would be best" (Cianciolo, 1970, p.43).

Fig. 6 *Mickey Flies Away* by Maurice Sendak

Even if two artists did decide to illustrate the same story using the same media, it is unlikely that the finished products would look alike because each artist has their own style and would probably choose to illustrate different aspects of the story.

Artists use a variety of techniques and media in illustration to produce the effects they want. Some artists prefer only to use drawing techniques in their illustrations. These techniques involve a lot of shading and cross-hatching. Media typically used for drawings include pencils, pen and ink, and pastels. Most technical illustrators exclusively use drawing techniques and media in their designs. This is due to the fact

that the success of the their work relies on the clarity of image and line. Of all media, drawing materials such as pencils and pen and ink are known by artists to produce the clearest, sharpest, graphic images. Technical illustrators rely on these materials to produce accurate scientific and instructional illustrations that the public can understand.

In addition to drawing, artists also have the option of painting their illustrations. Paints by definition are simply powdered colors mixed with binding mediums. Different types of paint use different kinds of binders. Watercolor uses gum arabic, tempera uses egg yolk or another emulsion, and oil paint uses different types of oils for its binder (Hobbs and Salome, 1991, pp. 138, 141). Painting is generally used in both decorative and narrative illustration. In reality, good decorative and narrative illustrators usually use a combination drawing and painting techniques in their illustrations. A lot of artists choose to paint their illustrations, then go over the paintings with ink to clarify the images. Because illustrators use ink in top of their paintings, they need to use paints that dry quickly. Tempera paint is probably the most popular paint used by decorative and narrative illustrators because it dries quickly with a soft matte finish and it lends itself to fine details. Artists can apply tempera paint to their illustrations in small sections simply by using a fine brush. This is very beneficial to a decorative illustrator who is filling in a tightly drawn pattern and to a narrative illustrator who is painting facial features.

Another popular technique of illustrating is printmaking. Illustrators often utilize both relief (printing the raised surface) and intaglio (printing the indented surface) techniques. Relief printing can be done on both wood and linoleum blocks, while intaglio prints can be executed on either stone, copper or zinc plates, or Plexiglas. One of the endearing qualities of printmaking is that the finished products tend to be rather emotive in nature. Prints can also be quite graphic and therefore can be used in decorative and technical illustrations. However, printmaking is generally a costlier and

more time consuming alternative to the perfectly acceptable drawing techniques used by these types of illustrators. Therefore, it is usually narrative illustrators who take advantage of the benefits of printmaking. Narrative illustrations tend to be more emotional than their graphically related counterparts. The quality of lines and shading achieved in printmaking can range from tight and technical to loose and expressive, making printmaking the perfect medium for narrative illustrators.

Sometimes illustrators decide that one media is not enough to get their ideas across in their illustrations. The result is a mixed media illustration. Most mixed media illustrations consist of collages, or fragments of things pasted to a flat surface. The objects included in a collage can be just about anything- paper cutouts, paintings, photographs, drawings, or even scraps of fabric (Hobbs and Salome; 1991, p. 155). As with printmaking, this technique is most suitable for narrative illustration because it allows for the most creativity within the three categories of illustration. Mixed media work, especially collage, is not suitable for technical illustrators because its finished product is often the exact opposite of the clear, graphic images necessary for strong scientific and instructional illustrations. Some decorative illustrations, such as jewel-encrusted illuminated manuscripts utilize mixed media techniques. However, mixed media is most successful when used for illustrating narrative scenes.

While these are general rules for attributing different media to different styles of illustration, it is really up to each individual illustrator to decide which media s/he wishes to employ in their work. Some illustrators are simply more skilled in one studio area than another, and choose to integrate their strengths into their work. Others use illustrating as a means of trying out a technique or medium that was previously foreign to them. All that needs to happen for good illustrations to occur is for each artist to pick a medium and use it in a way that it contributes to the success of the illustration.

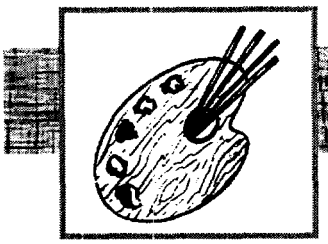


Table One: Caldecott Medal Winners

1938-2000

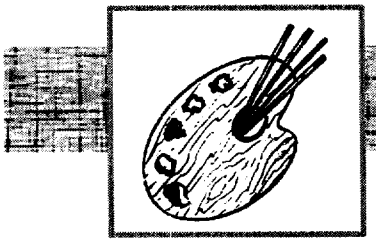
- 2000: *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback
- 1999: *Snowflake Bentley*, illustrated by Mary Azarian; text: Jacqueline Briggs Martin
- 1998: *Rapunzel* by Paul O. Zelinsky
- 1997: *Golem* by David Wisniewski
- 1996: *Officer Buckle and Gloria* by Peggy Rathmann
- 1995: *Smoky Night* , illustrated by David Diaz; text: Eve Bunting
- 1994: *Grandfather's Journey*, illustrated by Allen Say; text: Walter Lorraine
- 1993: *Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully
- 1992: *Tuesday* by David Wiesner
- 1991: *Black and White* by David Macaulay
- 1990: *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story* by Ed Young
- 1989: *Song and Dance Man,* illustrated by Stephen Gammell; text: Karen Ackerman
- 1988: *Owl Moon*, illustrated by John Schoenherr; text: Jane Yolen
- 1987: *Hey, Al*, illustrated by Richard Egielski; text: Arthur Yorinks
- 1986: *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg
- 1985: *Saint George and the Dragon*, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman; text: retold by Margaret Hodges
- 1984: *The Glorious Flight: Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot* by Alice and Martin Provensen
- 1983: *Shadow*, translated and illustrated by Marcia Brown; original text in French: Blaise Cendrars
- 1982: *Jumanji* by Chris Van Allsburg
- 1981: *Fables* by Arnold Lobel
- 1980: *Ox-Cart Man*, illustrated by Barbara Cooney; text: Donald Hall
- 1979: *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* by Paul Goble
- 1978: *Noah's Ark* by Peter Spier
- 1977: *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions*, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillion; text: Margaret Musgrove

Table One (continued)

- 1976: *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillion; text: retold by Verna Aardema
- 1975: *Arrow to the Sun* by Gerald McDermott
- 1974: *Duffy and the Devil*, illustrated by Margot Zemach; text: retold by Harve Zemach
- 1973: *The Funny Little Women*, illustrated by Blair Lent; text: retold by Arlene Mosel
- 1972: *One Fine Day*, retold and illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian
- 1971: *A Story A Story*, retold and illustrated by Gail E. Haley
- 1970: *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig
- 1969: *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship*, illustrated by Uri Shulevitx; text: retold by Arthur Ransome
- 1968: *Drummer Hoff*, illustrated by Ed Emberley; text: adapted by Barbara Emberley
- 1967: *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine* by Evaline Ness
- 1966: *Always Room for One More*, illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian; text: Sorche Nic Leodhas
- 1965: *May I Bring a Friend?*, illustrated by Beni Montresor; text: Beatrice Schenk de Regniers
- 1964: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- 1963: *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats
- 1962: *Once a Mouse*, retold and illustrated by Marcia Brown
- 1961: *Baboushka and the Three Kings*, illustrated by Nicolas Sidjakov; text: Ruth Robbins
- 1960: *Nine Days to Christmas*, illustrated by Marie Hall Ets; text: Marie Hall Ets and Aurora Labastida
- 1959: *Chaunticleer and the Fox*, illustrated by Barbara Cooney; text: adapted from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales by Barbara Cooney
- 1958: *Time of Wonder* by Robert McCloskey
- 1957: *A Tree is Nice*, illustrated by Marc Simont; text: Janice Udry
- 1956: *Frog Went A-Coutin'*, illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky; text: retold by John Langstaff
- 1955: *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper*, illustrated by Marcia Brown; text: translated from Charles Perrault by Marcia Brown

Table One (continued)

- 1954: *Madeline's Rescue* by Ludwig Bemelmans
- 1953: *The Biggest Bear* by Lynd Ward
- 1952: *Finder's Keepers*, illustrated by Nicholas Mordvinoff; text: William Lipkind
- 1951: *The Egg Tree* by Katherine Milhous
- 1950: *Song of the Swallows* by Leo Politi
- 1949: *The Big Snow* by Berta and Elmer Hader
- 1948: *White Snow, Bright Snow*, illustrated by Roger Duvoisin; text: Alvin Tresselt
- 1947: *The Little Island*, illustrated by Leonard Weisgard; text: Golden MacDonald
- 1946: *The Rooster Crows* by Maude and Miska Petersham
- 1945: *Prayer for a Child, illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones; text: Rachel Field*
- 1944: *Many Moons*, illustrated by Louis Slobodkin; text: James Thurber
- 1943: *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton
- 1942: *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey
- 1941: *They Were Strong and Good* by Robert Lawson
- 1940: *Abraham Lincoln* by Ingri and Edgar Parin d' Aulaire
- 1939: *Mei Li* by Thomas Handforth
- 1938: *Animals of the Bible, A Picture Book*, illustrated by Dorothy P. Lanthrop; text: selected by Helen Dean Fish



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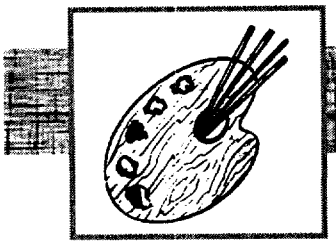
September 2000 Lecture of graphic artist Tim Rollins at Ball State University During this lecture, presented during Univercity 2000, Rollins discussed the importance of merging graphic elements in art.

September 2000. http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues96/jun96/nature.html
This website, affiliated with Smithsonian Magazine, deals with the art of scientific illustration.



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4. *Alan Asleep* from The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, Chris Van Allsburg 1979. Schwarcz, 1982.
5. *A Wolf Borrowing a Cup of Sugar* from The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, Lane Smith 1989. Scieszka and Smith, 1989.
6. *Mickey* from In the Night Kitchen, Maurice Sendak 1970. Lanes, 1993.
7. *The Fairy Ring* title page sketch. Klemin, 1970.
8. *Figure Initial, Corbie Psalter* c. 800. Pacht, 1986.
9. *Initial to the Book of Daniel* mid. 12th century. Pacht, 1986.
10. *Anniversary Card*, Anthony Browne. Goldsmith, 1984.
11. *Chevrolet Poster*, 1935. Goldsmith, 1984.
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14. *Heart*, Giusti, 1962. Klemin, 1970.
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19. *Science: Discovery and Process*, Main and Griffiths 1971. Goldsmith, 1984.
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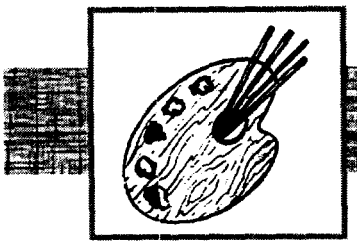
24. *Angels* from The Snowy Day, Ezra Jack Keats 1962. Schwarcz, 1982.
25. *Baking* from In the Night Kitchen, Maurice Sendak, 1970. Hearn, 110.
26. *Monkeys Steal Food, Miss One Turn* from Jumanji, Chris Van Allsburg 1981. Hearn, 110.
27. *Byron Stuck to the Glass* from The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963. Lundeen, 2000.



Curriculum Contents

Unit One: Decorative Illustration D-1 - D-14

Art History: Simulation activity featuring illuminated manuscripts
Aesthetics: Activity on the categorization of decorative illustration as art or craft
Art Criticism: Formal critique of decorative illustrations in the guise of a museum simulation.
Art Production: Creation of an illuminated decorative illustration combining a symbol and a letter

Unit Two: Technical Illustration T-1 - T-16

Art History: Simulation activity featuring the scientific drawings of Leonardo da Vinci
Aesthetics: Token response activity centering on technical illustrations and the idea of fine art
Art Criticism: Collaborative creation of a rubric for critiquing technical illustrations
Art Production: Creation of a technically illustrated process using pen and ink and heavy- weight paper

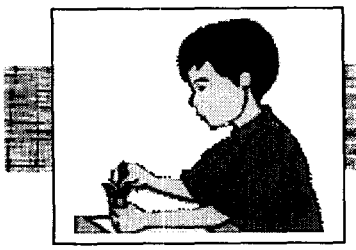
Unit Three: Narrative Illustration N-1 - N-18

Art History: Activity on the narrative qualities in William Hogarth's work.
Aesthetics: Activity on the quality of illustrations in children's books
Art Criticism: Simulation of judging Caldecott award-winning narrative illustrations
Art Production: Creation of a printed narrative illustration complementing a section of a book.

Curriculum Contents (continued)

Making Connections C-1 - C-3

Art Criticism: Simulation of illustration job fair



Decorative Illustration Unit

4th-6th grade appropriate

CORE CONTENT:

This unit covers traditional and contemporary decorative illustration. It is comprised of four lessons and covers a span of about seven days. Students learn about the evolution of decorative illustration and create their own illuminated illustrations.

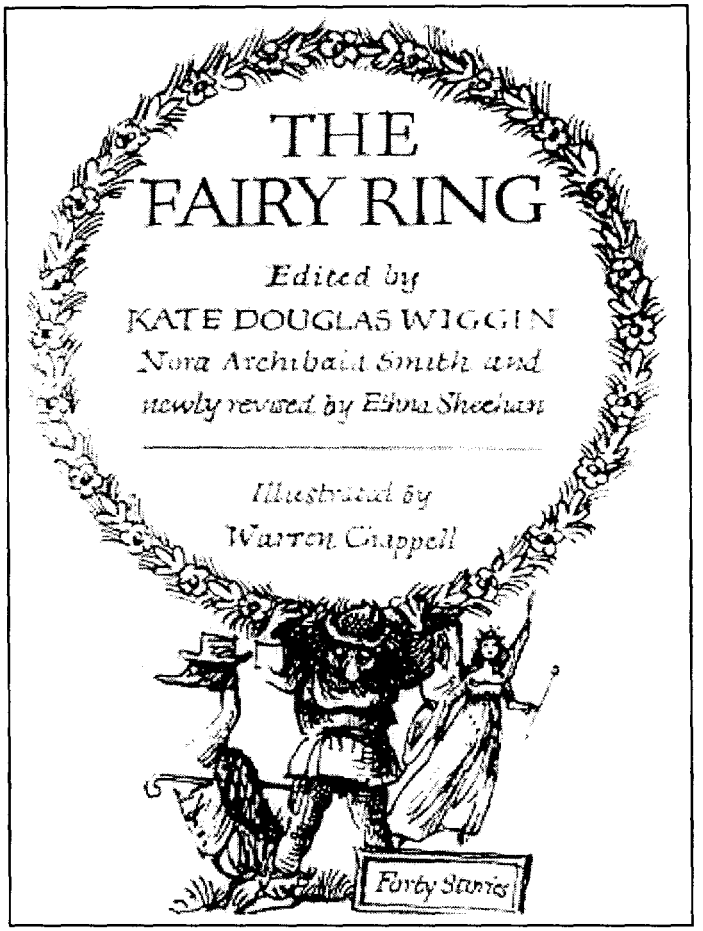


Fig. 7 Title page from *The Fairy Ring*

GOALS:

Art History: Students will learn about the first decorative illustrations, illuminated manuscripts.

Aesthetics: Students will discuss the idea of art vs. craft.

Art Criticism: Students will use the four aesthetic theories and to describe, consider, analyze, interpret, and judge art.

Art Production: Students will make their own illuminated decorative illustration.

PREPARATION:

1. Create an illuminated illustration, example.
2. Gather resources
3. Make bulletin boards

RESOURCES:

- Images of illuminated manuscripts.
- History of illuminated manuscripts worksheet (included)
- Background information on illuminated manuscript worksheets (included)
- Images of contemporary decorative illustrations
- Dr. Smalls' memo (included)
- Art criticism worksheet (included)
- Access to a computer lab (if not, students may neatly hand-write their assignments)

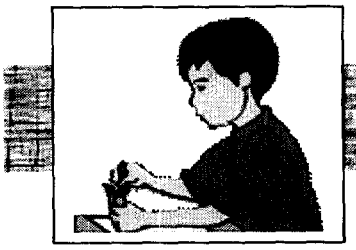
MATERIALS:

- pencils
- scratch paper
- overhead projector
- overhead markers
- chalkboard or dry-erase board
- chalk or dry-erase markers
- newsprint
- 81/2" x 11" drawing paper
- colored markers
- gold and silver paint pens
- access to a copier (preferably color)
- laminating machine (optional)
- binding machine (optional)

VOCABULARY:

decorative illustration
illuminated manuscript
nobility
monks
monasteries
art
craft
aesthetic theories
imitationalism
functionalism
formalism
emotionalism
thumbnail sketch

* elements and principles of art (advance knowledge of the elements/principles of art is necessary for the AC lesson)
symbol



Lesson One: Art History

Decorative Illustration

CORE CONTENT:

Illuminated manuscripts as the origin of decorative illustration.

OBJECTIVE:

Students will cooperatively formulate the history of illuminated manuscripts by answering completing a literacy guide.

Fig. 8 *Figure Initial* c. 800

PREPARATION:

1. Photocopy and display images of illuminated manuscripts.
2. Make one copy of the 'History of Illuminated Manuscripts" worksheets for each child in class (see attached sheets).
3. Make copies of the "Background Information" needed to answer the other worksheets (see attached sheets)
4. Predetermine 2 groups among the class members for use during the activity.

1. Explain to the class that they are going to be starting a unit on decorative illustration. Define decorative illustrations as illustrations which serve to beautify and highlight areas of interest from within a body of text.
2. Call attention to the displayed images of illuminated manuscripts. Explain that these

illustrations were the first to be decorative in nature and that they have a rich and interesting history. Explain to the class that you spilled some paint on the packets you were going to hand out and that you need the student's help to piece together the correct information.

3. Pass out a copy of the " History of Illuminated Manuscript" worksheets to each student, as well as a copy of the 'messed up' back ground information sheet (see attached). Explain that the worksheet is divided into two sections because the class will work in two teams to figure out the missing information.
4. Divide the class in half and pass out the background information sheets (see attached sheets).
5. Once the children start working, walk around the classroom to ensure that everyone is on task.
6. After the children finish answering the questions from their section of the worksheet (this could take all period), have the first group come up to the front of the class and present their findings. Have groups write their answers on the overhead so that everyone in the class can both see and hear. Teacher should monitor answers and correct any mistakes. Instruct the other half of the class to fill in the rest of their worksheets as the groups present their findings.

RESOURCES:

- IMAGES OF ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS
- HISTORY OF ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS WORKSHEETS (SEE ATTACHED)
- BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS (SEE ATTACHED)

MATERIALS:

- PENCILS (ONE PER STUDENT)
- SCRATCH PAPER
- OVERHEAD PROJECTOR
- BLANK OVERHEAD SHEETS
- OVERHEAD MARKERS

7. Once one group is finished, repeat the process with the other group.
8. Tell the class that next class, they will be discussing decorative illustrations in more depth and that for homework each child must bring in an example of modern decorative illustrations. Restate the definition of decorative illustration and provide some examples of common objects (ie books with title pages, wallpaper samples, etc).

Fig. 9 *Initial to the Book of Daniel* 12th cent.

EVALUATION:

Did the students work cooperatively to formulate answers to the questions?

Did the students share their responses in a manner so that the rest of the class was able to construct a full history of illuminated manuscripts?

EXTENSIONS

CONTINUATION:

Have students research another form of decorative illustration and create their own historical literacy guide for it.

GRADE UP:

Divide the material into smaller sections. Create more groups to fit these sections and allow students to create their own literacy guides for their assigned sections.

GRADE DOWN:

Make the questions on the literacy guide more literal and discuss higher order questions as a class.

Background information on Illuminated Manuscripts

Taken from De Hamel, Christopher. Scribes and Illustrators. Toronto, University of Toronto Press. 1992

I. Who Made Illuminated Manuscripts?

Illuminated manuscripts were made between the late Roman Empire and the High Renaissance. This is a time span during the Romanesque period of about 1500 years! Most of these manuscripts were made in Europe by all different types of people. Monks made early illuminated manuscripts. This was because back in the Middle Ages (400 AD - 1100 AD), most people did not know how to read. Only nobility and people associated with the church, such as monks, knew how to read. Since members of the church knew how to read, it became their duty to teach other people how to read. Monasteries, the churches where monks lived, produced most of the manuscripts during the Middle Ages. Not a lot of people owned their own books during this time period, so the monks only made enough copies for their own monasteries.

Around 1100, however, things began to change. People built big universities in Paris, France and Bologna, Italy that were not related to the church. Suddenly, people who were not members of the church were becoming educated and learning to read. More and more new books were being written, and it was very hard for the monks to keep up with the demand. There were no photocopiers or printing presses yet, so the whole process of making books, including the illustrating, had to be done by hand. Suddenly people wanted copies of their own books. Students needed textbooks, and the nobility wanted to own beautifully decorated prayer books. Because the monks could not keep up with the demand, around 1200 AD stores opened that were dedicated to the art of illuminated manuscripts. If a customer wanted an illuminated manuscript, he went to a bookstore and commissioned, or ordered one. The customer would tell the shopkeeper what kind of book he wanted. He would decide what size the book would be, what would be in the book, how much decoration would be in the book, and the price of the book. Then the shopkeeper would tell the customer how long such a book would take to make and begin work on it.

Background Information on Illuminated Manuscripts

Taken from De Hamel, Christopher. Scribes and Illustrators. Toronto, University of Toronto Press. 1992

II. How Did the Artists Make These Illustrations and How Long Did the Process Take?

The process of making all illuminated manuscripts is very similar, but there are lots of choices when it comes to decorating. The earliest manuscripts enlarged the first letter of the script and filled it with color. Manuscripts from the 7th century (600 AD) show text columns being separated by initials decorated with patterns and animal forms. For the next 800 years, even the simplest text manuscripts started with a large initial on the first page. Chapters were marked with similar, smaller capitals. It is important to remember that the beginnings were marked with a lot of decoration because medieval books did not have title pages. The big, decorated letters announced the beginning.

Decoration could have been in full color, with or without gold, on the first page only, or in the whole manuscript. Manuscripts are only considered illuminated if they contain gold or silver which reflects the light. A manuscript with a lot of decoration done in color but without gold or silver is technically not illuminated. Once illustrators decided what types of decorations they wanted to do, the process of making the illuminations became very easy. First, the illustrators cleaned their paper or parchment to make sure that it was free of dirt and grease. This had to be done before the illustrator could decorate the page. Next, the illustrator sketched the designs on the pages and went over them roughly in ink. If the manuscript was to be illuminated, the gold was applied next. After the gold, the illustrator painted the designs with pens. First the entire area of the design was painted, then the shadows and highlights. Finally, little details, such as facial features were added to finish the pictures.

The History of Illuminated Manuscripts

Name_____

Date_____

Illuminated manuscripts are not only beautiful to look at, but are very important artistically because they are one of the oldest forms of decorative illustrations. After reading the background information given to you, try to answer the questions based on the missing information. Be sure to work as a team to figure out the missing information!

I. Who Made Illuminated Manuscripts?

A. When were illuminated manuscripts made?_____

_____

B. How long were manuscripts produced?_____

C. Where were these manuscripts made?_____

D. Why were they not made in the United States?_____

_____

E. What didn't most people know how to do in the Middle Ages?

_____

F. What did the nobility and members of the church have in common?_____

G. Why did members of the church try to help others learn how to read?_____

H. Why do you think that only a handful of people owned books during the Middle Ages?_____

_____

I. What changed around 1100 AD that affected illuminated manuscripts?_____

J. How were these illuminated manuscripts made?_____

_____

K. Give two reasons why people wanted to own their own books.

_____

_____

L. Because of this, what happened in 1200 AD? _____

_____

M. Describe the process of buying an illuminated manuscript.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The History of Illuminated Manuscripts

Name_____

Date_____

Illuminated manuscripts are not only beautiful to look at, but are very important artistically because they are one of the oldest forms of decorative illustrations. After reading the background information given to you, try to answer the questions based on the missing information. Be sure to work as a team to figure out the missing information!

II. How Did the Artists Make These Illustrations, and How Long Did It Take?

A. How were the earliest manuscripts decorated?_____

_____

B. How were manuscripts from the 7th century decorated?_____

_____

C. How were the chapters in the book marked?_____

_____

D. Why were manuscripts started with big initial letters?_____

_____

E. Name some different ways books could have been decorated.

_____

_____

F. How does this compare to how books are decorated now?

_____

_____

G. What are the steps to illustrating a manuscript?_____

_____

_____

H. What makes an illuminated manuscript different than a regular manuscript? _____

_____

I. How long did it take to complete the illustrating process? Why?_____

_____

J. Why did it take monks a long time to do illustrations?

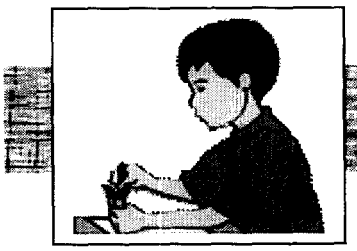
_____

K. How were professional illustrators paid?_____

_____

L. How did this affect their work?_____

_____



Lesson Two: Aesthetics

Decorative Illustration

CORE CONTENT:

The debate whether decorative illustration should be judged as art or craft.

Fig. 10. *Anniversary Card*

OBJECTIVE:

Based on class discussion, students will formulate their own opinion on whether decorative illustrations should be considered art or craft.

PREPARATION:

1. Photocopy and display images of illuminated manuscripts from the previous lesson as well as examples of contemporary decorative illustrations. Leave room to add other images to the display.
2. Write the words 'art' and ' craft' on the board, leaving space for student comments.

PROCEDURE:

1. As students arrive, point their attention to the board. Ask the students what they think some components of art are, and have the students Write down their answers on the board underneath 'art'.
2. Repeat the process with the the term 'craft'.

3. Ask the students to add their homework assignment (bring in one example of decorative illustration from home) to the display of other images.
4. Once all the images are displayed, ask the students to come up and look at all the images.
5. After the students have had sufficient time to look at the images, remind the students that these images are all examples of decorative illustration. Ask the students to define decorative illustration based on what they see in the images and from their prior knowledge of the topic.
6. After defining decorative illustration, explain that people often think of these images as craft and not art. Pose the question to the students, "Are decorative illustrations art or craft?" based on the class's definition. Encourage individual responses in the discussion which correlate with the new definitions of art and craft proposed by the class.

RESOURCES:

- IMAGES OF ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS
- IMAGES OF CONTEMPORARY DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATIONS (I.E. WRAPPING PAPER, PAPER TOWELS, BOOK JACKETS)
- CLASS EXAMPLES OF DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATION

MATERIALS:

- CHALKBOARD OR DRY-ERASE BOARD
- CHALK OR DRY-ERASE MARKERS

7. Tell the class now that they have decided whether decorative illustration is art or craft that next class period they will be formally critiquing examples of decorative illustration.

EVALUATION:

Did the students formulate class definitions of art and craft?

Did students defend on refute their answers based on these definitions?

Fig. 11 *Chevrolet poster* 1935

EXTENSIONS:

CONTINUATION:

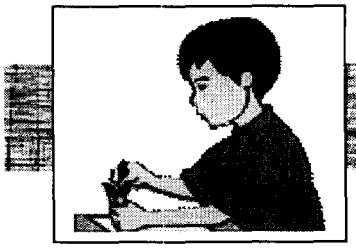
Have students divide images into art and craft piles; discuss why they put each image in each pile.

GRADE UP:

Study one artwork, defend or refute why it is art or craft.

GRADE DOWN:

Look at smaller number of images provided exclusively by teacher.



Lesson Three: Art Criticism

Decorative Illustration

CORE CONTENT:

Formal critique of decorative illustration.

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to judge decorative illustrations using a worksheet based on the four aesthetic theories.

Fig. 12 *Water Snake* 1890

PREPARATION:

1. Make bulletin board explaining how to test for imitationalism, formalism. functionalism, and emotionalism in art.
2. Make a copy of Dr. Smalls' memo for each student in the class (see attached sheet).
3. Make a copy of the art criticism worksheet for each student in the class (see attached sheet).
4. Make color copies of 4 different examples of decorative illustration (re-use from lesson one, if necessary).
5. Pre-determine groups of four from within the class for the activity.

5. NOTE: This lesson requires previous knowledge of the elements and principles of art. This lesson can be modified to include a discussion of the elements and principles of art.

RESOURCES:

- 4 IMAGES OF DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATION
- COPIES OF DR. SMALLS' MEMO FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE CLASS (SEE ATTACHED SHEET)
- COPIES OF ART CRITICISM WORKSHEET FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE CLASS (SEE ATTACHED SHEET)
- AESTHETIC THEORIES BULLETIN BOARD

MATERIALS:

- PENCILS (ONE PER STUDENT)

PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out a copy of Dr. Smalls' memo to each student (see attached sheet). Read over memo with class, answering any questions.
2. Explain to the class that Dr. Smalls wants the class to judge artwork according to the four aesthetic theories. Point out the bulletin board to the class, explaining what the four theories are. Be sure that the students really understand what the four theories mean before going on to the next step.
3. Explain to the class that Dr. Smalls needs help critiquing four artworks before he can hang them up in his museum. The class will be responsible for critiquing the four artworks based on the aesthetic theories and deciding which room the illustrations should be hung in the museum. The rooms in the museum correspond to the four aesthetic theories.
4. Divide the class into four groups. Pass out one decorative illustration image to each group and one copy of the art criticism worksheet to each student (see attached sheet).
5. Walk around the room while the students are working to ensure that they are on task and to answer any of their questions.

6. After all the groups are done, have them share their findings with the class.
7. Discuss the groups' findings. Ask the other students in the class if they agree with the original group's conclusion. If not, judge the individual illustrations as a class until a judgement is passed on which theory best describes the illustrations. At the end of class, students must decide which gallery each piece goes in.
8. Tell the class that next period they will begin production on their own personal decorative illustration.

EVALUATION:

Were the students able to judge an example of decorative illustration with the help of the aesthetic theories?

EXTENSIONS:

CONTINUATION:

To see if students really understand aesthetic theory judging, have them judge something else using the same worksheet.

GRADE UP:

Get more in depth with the aesthetic theories, especially emotionalism.

GRADE DOWN:

Do one example as as a class before letting groups work.

Memo to: All art critics

RE: I need your help!!!!!!!!!

Dear Art Critics,

My name is Dr. Smalls, and I need your help! I just bought a new art museum in town that is specifically designed only to exhibit illustrations. The problem is, the museum is supposed to open to the public next week and none of the artwork is hung on the walls for display! I got into a big argument with the rest of my museum staff because they wanted to hang the illustrations in chronological order. I, however, wanted the illustrations to be hung in rooms according to the imitational, functional, formal, and emotional qualities of art. My museum staff got so mad that they just quit because they didn't know how to judge artwork according to those qualities! I need your help distinguishing which illustrations belong to which aesthetic quality so that I can hang them in the right room in my museum! Will you please help me so that my museum can open on time?

Sincerely,

Dr. Smalls

Dr. Smalls

Art Criticism Worksheet for Dr. Smalls' Museum

Artwork_____ Name_____

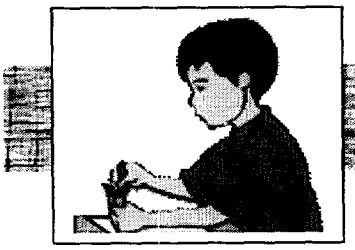
Date of Artwork_____ Date_____

Write in the boxes how the artwork rates in each of the four categories. Assign a value (+ for lots of reasons and - for few reasons) and choose the overall value that best describes the artwork. Remember, this value decides where the illustration will be hung in the museum.

1. Imitationalism-what do you see? - 0 0 0 0 +	2. Functionalism-what is the practical purpose? - 0 0 0 0 +
2. Emotionalism-how does this make you feel? - 0 0 0 0 +	4. Formalism-what elements and principles of art do you see? - 0 0 0 0 +

5. Judge the overall value of the artwork. Tell why it belongs in that particular room in the museum._____

_____



Lesson Four: Production

Decorative Illustration

CORE CONTENT:

Creation of an illuminated decorative illustration combining a symbol and a letter.

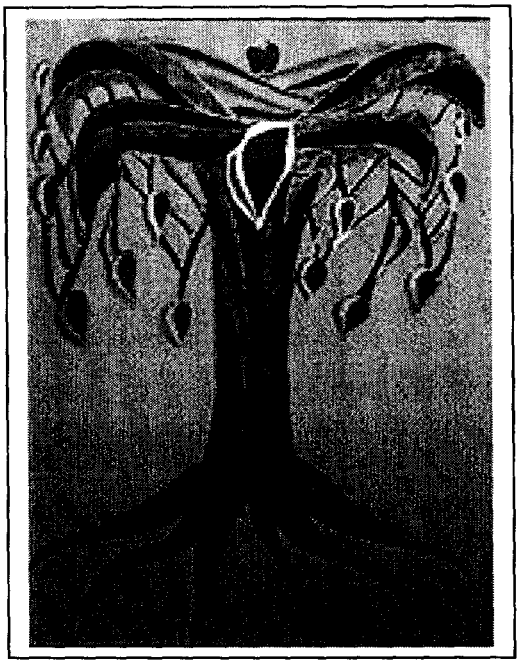


Fig. 13 Illuminated letter example

OBJECTIVE:

Students will create their own illuminated decorative illustrations, complete with thumbnail sketches and a written statement explaining the symbolism of their illustrations.

PREPARATION:

1. Gather materials and set aside.
2. Create exemplar illustration.
3. Set up demonstration table with materials needed for the demonstration.
4. List requirements for the illustration on the board: must combine a letter and a symbol; must incorporate gold or silver to be illuminated; must turn in thumbnail sketches; a written statement explaining the color choices and symbolism; Final copy should be executed with colored markers.

PROCEDURE:

1. Gather students around demonstration table.
2. Explain that they will be making their own illuminated illustrations, combining a letter and a symbol like in illuminated manuscripts.
3. Show the example, and direct attention to the directions on the board. Go over the directions on the board, while pointing out how the example follows the directions.
4. Direct the students back to their seats. Hand out newsprint and pencils for students to create their thumbnail sketches of their ideas.
5. Once students have done a sufficient number of sketches (at least five), have them pick out their favorite design and show it to the teacher. Make suggestions on design elements where applicable.
6. During the next class period, take the class to the computer lab to write their written statements (1 page maximum, double spaces) about why they chose the design they did. Included should be explanations of the letter and symbol in the design, as well as the color choices.

RESOURCES:

- DECORATIVE ILLUSTRATION EXEMPLAR
- COMPUTER LAB (FOR ARTIST STATEMENT; IF NOT AVAILABLE STUDENTS MAY HAND-WRITE THEIR EXPLANATIONS)

MATERIALS:

- PENCILS
- NEWSPRINT
- 81/2" X 11" DRAWING PAPER
- COLORED MARKERS
- GOLD AND SILVER PAINT PENS
- LAMINATING MACHINE*
- BINDING MACHINE*

* CAN OMIT LAST STEPS OF THE PRODUCTION IF NOT AVAILABLE

7. During the third class period, arrange for the students to begin work on their final illustrations. Hand out drawing paper, markers, and gold and silver paint pens.
8. Go around the room while students are working to. make sure they're on task and to offer suggestions.
9. Once students are finished with their illustrations (this could take a couple of days), have them look over their written explanations for any mistakes or changes. Give them a chance to revise (This can be done on an individual basis).
10. After students are finished with their written explanations, they should turn in all parts of their project for a grade.
11. After grading, teacher should make a color copy (if available ; if not use black and white) of each illustration and a copy of each explanation.
12. Laminate each page and use a binding machine to bind the illustrations and explanations in book form. This will represent the class illuminated manuscript.

EVALUATION:

Did the students follow the directions when making their illustration (8 1/2 " x 11", markers, paint pens, letter, and symbol)?
Did the students describe their illustration in a written form?

EXTENSIONS:

CONTINUATION:

Compare class book as a whole to the Book of Kells; discuss the similarities and differences.

GRADE UP:

Let students use colored ink with calligraphy pens instead of markers.

GRADE DOWN:

Use opaque projector to enlarge thumbnail sketch to 81/2" x 11" sheet.